



## **PARALLEL SESSION 1.5**

**WIN-WIN STRATEGY FOR THE CONTROL AND PREVENTION OF NCDS AND  
TACKLING ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHALLENGES**



## | BACKGROUND

Environmental factors are main causes of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). Growing evidence indicates that early life exposure to environmental risks, such as chemicals, radiation and air pollutants, might increase NCD risk throughout the life course.<sup>1</sup> Air pollution alone causes about 6.5 million deaths a year, or one in eight of all deaths. The strongest causal associations are seen between PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution and cardiovascular and pulmonary disease as well as with several highly prevalent non-communicable diseases including diabetes, decreased cognitive function, attention-deficit or hyperactivity disorder and autism in children. Yet, around 2 billion children live in areas that exceed the World Health Organization annual limit of 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. These health burdens related to environmental pollution disproportionately fall on the poor and marginalized communities in low and middle income countries.<sup>2</sup>

There is a need for increased understanding on the environmental determinants of NCDs, including but not limited to: climate change (e.g. heat waves increasing risks for CVD and stroke), biodiversity loss, environmental pollution (air, water, soil, heavy metals, chemicals); impacts of the urban and built environment on NCDs (e.g. car-centric urban planning, environmental noise, housing, walkability, safe green spaces for physical activity and social interaction); consumption and production patterns across health, nutrition and other sectors. Moreover, the compounding effects of multiple environmental stressors (e.g. multiple contaminants through multiple exposure pathways) are poorly understood.

Although there is a growing understanding of the close relationship between health and environment, the linkages are not fully understood and integrated solutions are not effectively considered in policies and interventions across sectors. Moreover, there is a lack of policy recommendations that would enable policy makers to target the interventions across key sectors that would have the greatest beneficial long-term impacts on health, especially of vulnerable populations including children. Improving our understanding of these linkages and how they can be applied to support integrated decision-making can catalyse the public and private sector to act. Whole-of-government and whole-of-society actions are urgently needed for the control and prevention of NCDs and for reversing the alarming trend of environmental degradation and climate change.

-----

1 Preventing noncommunicable diseases by reducing environmental risk factors. WHO 2017

2 The Lancet Commission on pollution and health (2017)

## | OBJECTIVES

- To share the latest knowledge on environmental determinants of NCDs
- To share practical experiences and lessons learned on the use of science-based tools for identifying and assessing environmental risks of NCDs
- To share good practices and lessons learned on implementing actions to reduce environmental risks of NCDs
- To discuss multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder strategies, mechanisms and financing needs to tackle environmental determinants of NCDs





PRINCE MAHIDOL  
AWARD CONFERENCE

2019



Panelist

## Tony Capon

*Professor of Planetary Health*

University of Sydney  
Australia

Anthony Capon is the inaugural Professor of Planetary Health at the University of Sydney. A former director of the global health institute at United Nations University (UNU-IIGH), Tony is a public health physician and authority on environmental health and health promotion. For more than 20 years, Tony has been leading transdisciplinary research and capacity building efforts on the broad theme of urbanisation, sustainable development and human health. Since 2008, he has advised the International Council for Science (ICSU) on their global interdisciplinary science program on health and wellbeing in the changing urban environment using systems approaches. Tony is a member of The Rockefeller Foundation–Lancet Commission on Planetary Health which published its report *Safeguarding human health in the Anthropocene epoch* in 2015. He has served in numerous honorary leadership roles with professional and not-for-profit organisations including the International Society for Urban Health and the Frank Fenner Foundation.

